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Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Compilation of information from Member States on addressing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report is a compilation of the responses from Member States to a questionnaire on actions taken to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the United Nations. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The questionnaire and the complete responses from Member States are available on the website of the Permanent Forum (http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIISessions/Fourteenth.aspx).

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I. Introduction

1. As at 28 January 2015, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues had received written responses to its questionnaire on actions taken or planned to address and implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from the following States: Australia, Denmark and Greenland, Mexico, Paraguay and the United States of America.

2. The questionnaire sent to Member States contained five questions. The first question requested information on activities to address the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum at its thirteenth session, or recommendations made at previous sessions, with a special focus on the situation of indigenous women. The second question was related to the areas that the Permanent Forum will review in 2015: (a) the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (General Assembly resolution 69/2); (b) the post-2015 development agenda; and (c) youth, self-harm and suicide.

3. The high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples took place on 22 and 23 September 2014. The meeting was organized to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The World Conference resulted in a concise, action-oriented outcome document prepared on the basis of inclusive and open informal consultations with Member States and indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum decided to discuss the important themes contained in and to follow up on the outcome document of the World Conference.

4. In September 2000, 189 world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2). The Declaration set out, within a single framework, the key challenges facing humanity at the threshold of the new millennium, outlined a response to the challenges and established concrete measures for judging performance through a set of interrelated commitments, goals and targets on development, governance, peace, security and human rights. In recognition of the need to translate this commitment into action, the international community agreed to the Millennium Development Goals, which consist of eight goals to be achieved by 2015.

5. At the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the Secretary-General was requested to initiate thinking on a post-2015 development agenda and to recommend efforts to accelerate the progress towards the achievement of the Goals. In follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, Member States are currently developing a set of sustainable development goals, which will converge with the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. In line with these developments, the Permanent Forum decided to review its recommendations relating to the post-2015 development agenda. The Forum's recommendations have largely concerned the recognition of indigenous peoples as distinct stakeholders and the need to engage in a truly inclusive process, including indigenous women, youth and persons with disabilities. In addition, the Forum's recommendations are aimed at ensuring that the rights and priorities of indigenous peoples are included in the

post-2015 development agenda, in particular the development and the inclusion of clear indicators and monitoring tools relating to indigenous peoples in both the sustainable development goals and the development agenda.

6. The third and fourth questions addressed to Member States required them to comment on the obstacles to and the factors that facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum. The final question asked Member States to provide information on how their Governments are currently promoting and or implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

7. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the most comprehensive and advanced international instrument incorporating indigenous people's rights. The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. Article 42 of the Declaration established that the United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum, and the specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the Declaration and follow up on its effectiveness.

II. Responses of Member States concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the thirteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, or recommendations of previous sessions, with a special focus on indigenous women

8. Australia has a clear reform agenda to work with indigenous Australians and communities to achieve real, practical and demonstrable improvements in their lives, recognizing the special place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold in the nation. Government action is focused on making sure that children go to school; obtaining work for adults; making sure communities are safer to live in, and that the rule of law is applied; and achieving recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution. The Government is also focused on improving the health and well-being of individuals and families, which will support efforts to get children to go to school, to obtain work for adults and to make communities safer.

9. Australia's indigenous advancement strategy commenced on 1 July 2014, with funding of $4.8 billion over four years. The strategy replaced more than 150 individual programmes and activities with five flexible, broad-based programmes that will focus on achieving results in the Government's key priority areas of education, employment and community safety. The five broad programmes are: jobs, land and economy; children and schooling; safety and well-being; culture and capability; and remote Australia strategies.

10. Closing the gap in indigenous disadvantage and improving the education, employment and health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is also a high priority for the Australian Government. In 2008, the Australian Government agreed to six "closing-the-gap" targets addressing life expectancy, infant mortality, education and employment. An additional school attendance target was agreed upon in 2014. The Prime Minister reports annually on progress towards achieving the six targets.

11. The "closing-the-gap" targets are: close the gap in life expectancy within a generation (by 2031); halve the gap in mortality rates for indigenous children under five within a decade (by 2018); ensure that all indigenous four-year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (by 2013); halve the gap for indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (by 2018); halve the gap for indigenous students in year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates (by 2020), and halve the gap in employment outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians within a decade (by 2018).

12. Denmark and Greenland reported that while few of the recommendations made at the thirteenth session are directly applicable in the context of Denmark/Greenland, the recommendations of the Permanent Forum may be used to provide guidance for policymaking and drafting laws. Hence, the primary focus has been on the recommendation on the collection of data on self-harm and suicide among indigenous children and youth, as well as on violence against indigenous women, boys and girls and on the need to create or strengthen national bodies with a mandate for the protection of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, Denmark/Greenland reported that the recommendations of the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference, held in Alta, Norway, from 10 to 12 June 2013, will be actively pursued as national representatives had supported the use of the Alta outcome document during the elaboration of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

13. The Government of Mexico reported that its National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples is carrying out actions to comply with some of the recommendations from the thirteenth session of the Permanent Forum. In February 2013, in line with the national legal framework, and in compliance with international treaties relating to indigenous consultation, the Assembly of the Consultative Council of the National Commission adopted a protocol for the implementations of consultations with indigenous peoples based on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (ILO Convention No. 169). The protocol, the principles and procedures of which are based on the highest international standards, guarantees indigenous peoples the right to consultation. The protocol is relevant prior to the implementation of any development project that could affect indigenous peoples' rights or interests and also seeks to respect their constitutional right to self-determination. In 2014, four protocols on indigenous consultation were formalized with the National Commission of Electricity. The four protocols guarantee the participation of indigenous peoples in defining their own development priorities, as established by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (article 32, para. 1), before the construction and/or operation of any energy projects take place.

14. Paraguay reported that its national indigenous institute has promoted and supported two workshops on free, prior and informed consultation and consent, which have led to the drafting of a model protocol. Indigenous peoples' organizations are seeking a Presidential decree for its implementation.

15. In relation to the question of the granting of land titles to indigenous peoples, the following six land titles, a total of 60,00 hectares, were assigned to the following indigenous peoples in December 2014: Río Verde Ysakâ, Tajy Poty and Tekoha Ka'aguy Poty Kamba Avá peoples of the Guaraní Department of Canindeyú,

Cayin'o Clim of the Nivaclé peoples, Totobiegosode of the Ayoreo peoples and Yexwase Yet — San Fernando (Aldeas Puente Curupayty and Paso Lima y Centro) of the Enxet peoples. After 23 years of discussions, the Enxet indigenous peoples achieved the expropriation, in their favour, of 14,403 hectares, complying with the judgement of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. In December 2011, the national indigenous institute acquired 12,312 hectares of land for the Yakye Axa and Kelyenmagategma peoples of Paraguay.

16. On 23 December 2014, the national statistical and census bureau presented the final results of its third indigenous national population census. The document contains data on indigenous communities in the areas of private and collective housing and lands and gender and provides an updated panorama of demographic, social and economic data, desegregated by indigenous peoples and national departments.

17. The United States of America reported the 2010 Tribal Law and Order Act has steadily improved the ability of the federal Government to work with Indian tribes to investigate and prosecute crimes affecting indigenous communities. The Act gives tribes greater sentencing authority; strengthens defendants' rights; helps at-risk youth; establishes new guidelines and training for law enforcement officers handling domestic violence and sex crimes; improves services to victims; helps combat alcohol and drug abuse and expands recruitment and retention of tribal law enforcement officers at Bureau of Indian Affairs, giving them better access to criminal databases.

18. In September 2014, the Departments of Interior and Justice hosted a meeting of experts to discuss access to justice for indigenous peoples, at which alternative forms of justice that take into account indigenous peoples' customary laws, institutions and processes were discussed.

Situation of indigenous women

19. The situation of indigenous women is outlined in the eighth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women submitted by the Government of Denmark in June 2013. Of particular interest is the annexed report by the Government of Greenland on the implementation of the Convention. The report provides concrete information on all areas of the Convention, including access to education, the situation in the labour market, health, rural women and critical situations.

20. In regard to measures aimed at preventing violence and supporting victims of violence, since the 1980s the Government of Greenland has provided shelters and counselling centres for women or men who have been victims of violence and/or threats of violence or of other domestic crisis. In 2013, *Inatsisartut* (the Greenland Parliament) adopted a strategy and an action plan for 2014-2017 to combat violence in the domestic and the public sphere.

21. Mexico reported that through the programme on the rights of indigenous peoples its National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples seeks to promote the exercise of the rights of indigenous women, bridging the gap of gender inequality through inter-sectorial actions and coordination of the different stakeholders. This support includes:

(a) Support for shelters for indigenous women who are victims of family violence: the shelters provide physical protection and also education on topics

related to sexual and reproductive health (21 shelters were already established and 3 more opened in 2014);

(b) Coordination for the prevention of and attention for women victims of violence with an intercultural perspective (84 projects were supported in 2014);

(c) Strengthening gender equality among the indigenous population. These projects, which aim to promote information about the exercise of the rights of indigenous women through capacity-building activities, provide support to, inter alia, civil society organizations with experience related to women's rights and sexual and reproductive health (171 such projects were supported in 2014);

(d) Co-investment for the strengthening of indigenous women leadership (11 projects of co-investment were supported in 2014).

22. The United States Congress passed a third extension of the Violence against Women Act in February 2013, and President Obama signed its extension into law on 7 March 2013. This latest reauthorization contains an important new provision restoring the authority of indigenous tribes to prosecute non-Native perpetrators who commit domestic or dating violence on tribal lands against women who are members of a tribe. This is particularly important because Native American women, including adolescent girls, in the United States face disproportionately high rates of domestic violence, and statistics from the Department of Justice demonstrate that a majority of perpetrators are non-Native. The Act also extends effective programmes; expands the protections and services available to survivors of violence; and is aimed at preventing violence in future generations. This is in line with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as it empowers tribal institutions to address the challenges they face.

23. To highlight the topic of violence and discrimination against indigenous women and girls, the United States delivered a joint statement on behalf of 35 countries at the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council in June 2014. The United States representative to the Council, a member of the Cherokee Nation, also delivered first-hand observations regarding the devastating consequences that violence against indigenous women and girls has on individuals, their families and their communities, and committed the Government to addressing this issue in the Council and throughout the United Nations system. The United States supported the highlighting of this issue at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and in its outcome document.

III. State responses to the Permanent Forum's review areas for the Fourteenth Session in 2015

A. Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

24. Australia, which has been a long-time supporter of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, co-sponsored the initial United Nations resolution establishing the event. The Australian Government provided support for indigenous Australians to attend and to participate in the World Conference in their own capacity. Australia also made one of the largest contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for

Indigenous Populations, which supports the participation of indigenous peoples from around the world in international forums, including the World Conference.

25. Australia supported the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and looks forward to the continued positive engagement between Member States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies to help realize the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Australia continues to be an active participant in indigenous international forums.

26. The aspirations expressed in the outcome document of the World Conference are in alignment with Australia's support for indigenous peoples. The Australian Government is giving effect to these goals through policies and actions being taken in all areas of indigenous affairs.

27. Denmark and Greenland welcomed the outcome document of the World Conference, highlighting issues of particular importance to indigenous peoples that are of a global nature. It will serve as guidance for future actions at all levels to promote, protect and respect the rights of indigenous peoples.

28. Shortly after the adoption of the outcome document, Denmark co-sponsored an international seminar on ILO Convention No. 169 in Geneva on 27 and 28 November 2014. The seminar, inter alia, aimed to develop concrete recommendations for improving the implementation of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention as a contribution to the follow-up to the outcome document.

29. In addition, a Nordic expert meeting was held in Helsinki on 16 December 2014 with the participation of indigenous representatives. The focus of the Nordic countries is the question of indigenous peoples' participation at the United Nations and the review of the mandate of Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These are questions of crucial importance to indigenous peoples in the Nordic countries, and therefore the aim is first and foremost to contribute constructively and actively to the realization of these elements of the outcome document.

30. Mexico played an important role in the preparation of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, as well as during the negotiation of the outcome document. Mexico also supported the participation of indigenous peoples on an equal basis with Member States and promoted an open, inclusive and constructive dialogue between indigenous representatives and the representatives of Member States. The Mexican delegation that participated during the World Conference was headed by President Enrique Peña Nieto, who presented a statement at the opening of the Conference on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries.

31. Mexico is analysing the commitments reached in the outcome document in order to comply with them. The Government is promoting a constructive dialogue with indigenous peoples and communities as well as with the entities of the United Nations system in Mexico in order to define a joint action plan for the implementation of the outcome document.

32. Paraguay reported that the outcome document reflects the broad and participative process through which consensus was achieved between the participants. Paraguay noted with satisfaction that the outcome document of the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the World Conference in Indigenous

Peoples, held in Alta, Norway, was taken into consideration for the drafting of the outcome document of the World Conference and that it shows a concrete commitment and a call for action to achieve the well-being of indigenous peoples. The document also highlights the need for the promotion of the participation and leadership of indigenous women in their communities and in the formulation of programmes and public policies, protection against violence for women and girls and the elimination of the barriers that prevent the development of their capacities.

33. In Paraguay, where there are a number of distinct indigenous populations, including an uncontacted tribe, the outcome document provides an important instrument for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. For the national Government it represents a guiding instrument through which to focus its public policies on the effective implementation of the rights enshrined in the national Constitution, as well as in ratified international treaties on indigenous peoples.

34. The informal United States inter-agency working group on indigenous peoples includes officers from the Department of State, the Department of the Interior, the United States Agency for International Development and the White House. The working group is exploring ways to follow up on the recommendations and statements of intention in the outcome document of the World Conference. Special attention is being given to the four key priorities shared by the United States. Government and tribal governments in the United States: (a) combating violence against indigenous women and girls; (b) repatriating human remains and objects of cultural and religious significance and the protection of sacred sites; (c) attaining the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and (d) enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples throughout the United Nations system, including consideration of a new status for indigenous peoples within the United Nations. The Department of State held consultations with indigenous tribal leaders and representatives to develop the position of the United States on the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and it continues to be in close contact with indigenous leaders on the follow-up to the Conference and the implementation of its outcome. The next consultation will be held in February 2015.

35. In terms of the recommendations contained in the outcome document, the United States:

(a) Welcomes the recommendation in the outcome document that the Commission on the Status of Women examine empowering indigenous women. The United States is exploring possible initiatives for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission in March 2015, including providing speakers to official panel discussions and hosting side events;

(b) The State Department is actively working with the Department of the Interior and several tribes to recover sacred objects offered for sale at auctions in Paris and to raise awareness abroad of the importance of objects of cultural patrimony to indigenous peoples in the United States. More globally, the United States is engaged in discussions with tribal leaders and other States on how to best address the issue in a less ad hoc manner;

(c) With regard to fulfilling the Declaration's objectives and enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations meetings, the United States is exploring possible courses of action with United Nations officials, representatives of Member States and indigenous representatives.

B. Post-2015 development agenda

36. Australia is an active participant in international negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, supporting the continuation of the core elements of the Millennium Development Goals (including the eradication of extreme poverty, making sure every child can attend school and empowering women and girls) and a greater focus on economic growth, as private sector development and jobs creation are the primary drivers of poverty reduction.

37. Denmark and Greenland are working for an ambitious post-2015 agenda, focusing on eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. It is about advancing progress, but also ensuring that no one is left behind. For this reason, Denmark has advocated that economic, social and environmental sustainability should be integrated into all goals. The post-2015 agenda should be founded upon a human rights-based approach, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all, and should lead to action to combat inequalities and discrimination.

38. Denmark works to defend the promotion of human rights, including those of indigenous peoples, within the post-2015 agenda. During the sessions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Denmark actively worked for the inclusion of references to indigenous peoples, and specifically in relation to education and biodiversity. In this process, Denmark has consulted relevant civil society organizations, including the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, and major groups at the United Nations representing the interests and concerns of marginalized groups and groups of indigenous peoples. Mexico has advocated the inclusion of indigenous peoples' rights in the post-2015 development agenda.

39. Paraguay reported that through its national institute for indigenous peoples it has recommended the inclusion of indigenous peoples rights in the post-2015 development agenda. Taking into consideration that the objective of the sustainable development goals is to advance a programme of concrete actions, Paraguay considers it extremely important that the situation of indigenous peoples and respect for their rights are included in all policy and development plans. Paraguay therefore concurs with Goal 10 set out in the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, "Reduce inequality within and among countries" Paraguay considers that the targets under this objective should be highlighted and that the situation of indigenous peoples should be included as a priority.

40. Paraguay highlighted the fact that its two major policies, the national development plan and the national programme, "Planting opportunities", focus on the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty. In the development of both, Paraguay has worked closely with indigenous peoples in order to ensure adequate attention to their situation and their rights and to include a cross-cutting approach in the objectives of all its policies.

41. According to the United States of America, at the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, which resumed in January 2015, Member States will work with other stakeholders to support giving indigenous peoples' concerns due consideration in the post-2015 development agenda. At present, the proposals contained in the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development

Goals mention indigenous peoples under Goal 2, target 2.3, on agriculture, and under Goal 4, target 4.5, on education:

(a) target 2.3 reads: "By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family famers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment";

(b) target 4.5 reads: "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations".

C. Youth, self-harm and suicide and how this is being addressed

42. Australia reported that a key priority for the Government is to help reduce incidents of self-harm and suicide among indigenous peoples. The Government is working with the community on this serious issue. Australia is concerned that, while there are some positive trends with regard to the well-being of indigenous youth, with improvements in health and education outcomes, between 2008 and 2012, the rate of deaths from suicide for indigenous Australians was almost twice the rate for non-indigenous Australians. In addition, during from the period 2004-2005 to 2012-2013, the hospitalization rate for intentional self-harm increased for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians by 48.1 per cent, while the rate for other Australians remained relatively stable.

43. The Australian Government is working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention advisory group on strategic and practical ways to prevent suicide and improve the mental health of indigenous people. In addition, the Government is supporting research on addressing youth suicide and self-harm through an Australia-wide programme tackling the high rates of suicide and other social and emotional well-being problems in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Government has also funded a suicide prevention evaluation project being carried out by the University of Western Australia to gauge the effectiveness of existing suicide prevention strategies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

44. Denmark and Greenland reported that the Greenland self-Government has taken over the responsibility in all domestic areas in Greenland, including the areas of social affairs and education. A number of initiatives have been undertaken in recent years. For instance, Greenland and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF Denmark) entered into a cooperation agreement in 2010 with the objective of strengthening cooperation and efforts for creating the best possible opportunities for children and youth in Greenland. Moreover, in the spring of 2012, Greenland's first children's rights institution, including a position for a spokesperson for children, was established in Greenland.

45. There are several initiatives in Greenland regarding suicide prevention, the most recent of which is the launch of a national strategy on suicide prevention (2013-2019). There are also private initiatives, such as the *Inuuneruna Iggoraarsuk* project, initiated primarily by youth, which seeks to prevent suicide using a page on

Facebook. Greenland is also participating in the Arctic Council project entitled "The Evidence-Base for Promoting Mental Wellness and Resilience to Address Suicide in Circumpolar Communities".

46. The United States reported that it will hold the first-ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering, which will engage hundreds of Native American youth for a day-long session, in the summer of 2015. The meeting will build on the Native Youth Conference hosted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services in November 2014 and the tribal youth visit with President Obama. The Administration works to address indigenous youth suicide, self-harm and substance abuse and has issued several publications to raise awareness of these issues and provide guidance for prevention, including (a) "To Live to See the Great Day that Dawns: Preventing Suicide by American Indian and Alaska Native Youth and Young Adults"; (b) the "2014 Native Youth Report", which includes information about indigenous youth self-harm and suicide. In addition, the Administration has a website on American Indian and Alaska Native behavioural health (www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/ai-an). The White House Tribal Nations Conference, held on 2 and 3 December 2014, included, for the first time, a breakout session on "Mental health and substance abuse issues".

IV. Obstacles faced by Governments in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

47. Australia reported that it seeks to continue to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum and continues to address the disadvantages faced by indigenous peoples.

48. Denmark and Greenland reported that the recommendations of the Permanent Forum are numerous and can be difficult to implement as the situation of indigenous peoples is context driven. This also means that many recommendations are not applicable or are not fully applicable in the context of Denmark/Greenland. Moreover, some recommendations have a very broad scope and may require significant measures such as legislative changes. Thus, implementation may in some cases take several years. One example is the recommendation contained in paragraph 62 of the report on the thirteenth session that States conduct an independent audit of their constitutional and other laws, policies and programmes and to amend them, if needed, in order to remove all forms of discrimination.

49. At the thirteenth session, Denmark reiterated the call by the Arctic Caucus that the Permanent Forum should have a maximum of 50 outstanding recommendations, meaning that the Forum should not adopt any further recommendations until the outstanding recommendations have been implemented satisfactorily. Continuous follow-up to key recommendations is important to ensure accountability and impact on the ground.

50. Mexico thanked the experts of the Permanent Forum and its secretariat for having a more concise number of recommendations. The Government explained that the challenges it faced in their implementation were sometimes related to a lack of institutional coordination or the complexity of the recommendations, as well as the identification of sufficient capacity within its institutions. Nevertheless, the Government of Mexico expressed its confidence that the recommendations of the

Forum had contributed to strengthening actions to promote the rights of indigenous peoples.

51. Paraguay mentioned particular problems related to specific recommendations. In relation to free, prior and informed consent, the country lacked a unified protocol for the implementation of consultations with indigenous peoples. However, with this difficulty in mind, the Government was working on a protocol to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples.

52. The United States reported that it has strong mechanisms in place to discuss the merits of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum and whether and how they should be accommodated. Efforts could be enhanced, however, if the Forum, its members and its secretariat had closer relations with tribal leaders within the United States, as the recommendations and activities of the Forum are often not well known among the tribal leaders and indigenous representatives and do not consistently reflect their priorities.

V. Factors that facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum by national Governments

53. The Australian Government supports a practical approach to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The priority areas of school attendance, employment and reducing violence provide the basis for the improvement of the lives of the Islanders and for the achievement of the basic human rights and opportunities available to all Australians. Practical reforms to engagement and service delivery will facilitate positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and will ensure they have a greater say in how Government services that affect them are delivered regionally.

54. Denmark and Greenland participate in every session of the Permanent Forum and are hence fully aware of the recommendations of the Forum. Not all recommendations are implemented. This is due to the fact that some recommendations are found to be less relevant in the context of Denmark/Greenland. Other recommendations concern issues that have already been or are being addressed on the national level. One example is the recommendation of the Forum and the initiatives taken in Greenland regarding suicide prevention. The foundation of the day-to-day work on indigenous issues is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other human rights instruments. Implementation of the recommendations is thus facilitated to the extent that the recommendations are in line with the commitments made in those documents.

55. Mexico has worked on the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum as well as the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in coordination and collaboration with the organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations in Mexico.

56. The organization of the pre-sessional meeting of the Permanent Forum in Mexico, from 26 to 28 March 2014, led to an improved understanding of the work of the Forum among the representatives of Government institutions and indigenous peoples' organizations.

57. Paraguay reaffirmed its commitment to fight for the rights of indigenous peoples. Paraguay has adopted relevant legislation based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples starting with the Paraguayan Constitution, which, in 1992, introduced articles recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples. The national Constitution expressly recognizes the existence of indigenous peoples, defined as cultural groups that predate the formation of the Paraguayan State, including their rights over their traditional habitat as well as to maintain and develop their own ethnic identity through their social, economic, cultural and religious systems.

58. In the United States, the following institutional frameworks enable discussion of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, among other topics, among Government officials and between representatives of the Government and representatives of indigenous peoples within the United States:

(a) Executive Order 13175 mandates regular, meaningful consultations between the Government and federally recognized tribes on policies affecting them;

(b) For the past six years, in November and December, the White House has hosted a Tribal Nations Conference. At these much-anticipated meetings, Government officials, including Cabinet secretaries and other senior-level staff, hold interactive dialogues with members of the 566 federally recognized tribes. The conference held on 2 and 3 December 2014 included the first-ever breakout session on "international issues";

(c) The White House Council on Native American Affairs, established by the President through an Executive Order in June 2013, is comprised of the heads of Government departments, agencies and offices. It allows for improved high-level coordination among federal agencies on five focus areas: tribal economies, health and nutrition, education for Native American youth, law enforcement and public safety, and cultural and natural resource protection and the environment. Council members confer and have opportunities to engage directly with United States tribal representatives.

VI. Information on how Governments currently promote and/or implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

59. Australia continues to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While the Declaration is not legally binding, it remains useful and relevant to help inform the direction of policy, programmes and legislation. Australia shares the underlying commitment to deliver real and lasting improvements for indigenous peoples and their communities. The Australian Government is committed to an approach to the Declaration that is consistent with its domestic and international obligations, including in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

60. Australia issued its statement of support for the Declaration in April 2009. The Declaration recognizes the rich heritage of indigenous peoples and their entitlement to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Government has clear priorities in indigenous affairs: to focus on making sure children go to school so that they receive a good education; working with leaders, communities,

individuals and employers to ensure that adults have opportunities to work; making sure communities are safer to live in and that the rule of law is applied; and achieving constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

61. Denmark's international human rights policy maintains as one of its priorities the rights of indigenous peoples. In some cases, the situation of indigenous peoples is therefore raised in the universal periodic review of other States or in bilateral dialogues.

62. Denmark and Greenland also participate in a number of United Nations forums where indigenous peoples' rights are discussed and work actively to ensure references to the Declaration and the rights it contains in relevant "soft-law" instruments such as the resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. A recent example is the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, in which Denmark and Greenland participated actively and constructively throughout the process, and they continue to focus on the follow-up to the agreed outcome document.

63. Indigenous peoples are also a general focus area in Denmark's development cooperation that follows a human rights-based approach to development. The first strategy for Danish support for indigenous peoples was prepared in 2004, reflecting Denmark's international commitments such as ILO Convention No. 169. The principal strategy elements are (a) international processes; (b) bilateral and multilateral development cooperation; and (c) cooperation with indigenous peoples' organizations and non-governmental organizations. The strategy was supplemented by a technical guidance note in 2011. Denmark continues to provide financial assistance to a number of organizations and funds that promote indigenous peoples' rights.

64. Denmark and Greenland work closely to promote indigenous peoples' rights at the national level. The establishment of the self-government system for Greenland in 2009 is in itself an illustration of Greenland and Denmark's implementation of, and commitment to, the United Nations Declaration, in particular to the recommendation contained in paragraph 64 of the report of the Permanent Forum on its thirteenth session.

65. The situation in Greenland is described in Denmark's periodic reports to United Nations human rights treaty bodies. This means that there is continuous international monitoring of the human rights situation in Greenland.

66. Mexico reported that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been of great use in terms of guiding the design and implementation of Government policies related to indigenous peoples, including mechanisms for participation and consultation. The Government is committed to making the principle of free, prior and informed consent a reality, as expressed in article 19 of the Declaration.

67. The Government's public policy is outlined in the national development plan 2013-2018, which is built on the concept of an inclusive Mexico. The aim is for Mexico to become a country where all social rights are effectively exercised. Respect for indigenous peoples' rights as well as the improvement of their situation are an important task for the Mexican State. The National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples has prepared a special programme for indigenous peoples for the period 2014-2018. The programme involves actions for the promotion for the development of indigenous peoples aimed at improving their

living conditions in the areas of education, health, housing, basic income and infrastructure.

68. The six objectives of Mexico's special programme include: (a) promoting the recognition and validity of rights and access to justice by indigenous peoples; (b) increasing access to food, health and education; (c) promoting housing and infrastructure services while respecting the sustainability of indigenous communities; (d) improving the monetary and non-monetary income of indigenous peoples through productive projects; (e) strengthening the productive planning and coordination of governmental programmes that impact the well-being of indigenous peoples; and (f) preserving and strengthening indigenous peoples culture, recognizing them as part of the national heritage.

69. The Paraguayan State implements the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through specific policies and programmes for the well-being of indigenous peoples. According to the Government, the Declaration is the basis for the development and mainstreaming of indigenous peoples rights. The rights enshrined in the Declaration need to be evident in all the actions carried out by national Governments, with the fundamental goal of complying, guaranteeing and achieving indigenous peoples' rights, as well as harmonizing the legal mandate with the participation of indigenous peoples.

70. According to the report of the United States, many subjects discussed at the annual White House Tribal Nations Conferences are also addressed in the United Nations Declaration, including: self-determination, including self-governance, of tribal governments; health care; economic and infrastructure development; education; protecting natural and cultural resources; climate change; natural disaster mitigation; and law enforcement and public safety. After each conference, a progress report is issued. Progress reports for the conferences since 2010 are available online (at the www.whitehouse.gov). The reports describe the many tribal-related policies and programmes put in place by the United States Government to improve the situation of indigenous peoples in the United States.